

- 772 *ceeg*°. If the Bella Coola were strictly logical, one should expect them to conceive the upper surface of *ceeg*° as being concave. Instead, it is considered a flat surface, very similar to the earth, and no explanation is given of what life in the space between the dome, concave as viewed from this world, and the upper plane which could rest only on the peak of the dome. But logical accuracy is not a Bella Coola characteristic. This flat land is called *dlimes* "all or nothing" *menah-shapil*. It is illumined by a second sun, shining on it as the sun does on the earth. Far in the east of this upper region are extensive tide-fats. This land above is the home of many supernatural beings, who will be described in due course. The relative position of the sun to this upper world is ill-defined. According to some accounts, it travels by clearly marked trails on the surface, and a transparent dome is postulated to explain how its light reaches this earth. Others state that it moves like a bird or flying canoe through the space between the world and the dome-sky above. On many of these points there is a striking difference of opinion, which the Bella Coola explain by saying that their information is derived from ancient stories, which are personal possessions, and that no one knows the beliefs of his fellows. A co-ordinated theology, as these points out, has not evolved among the Bella Coola.

- 772 The sky, as it may be called if the reader will bear in mind that it is the underside of a flat land, was not always in its present condition. The Bella Coola say that long ago the supreme god instructed his Carpenters (I, p. 36) to make a sky. They started from the eastern extremity of the earth, but after a considerable part of the dome had been erected, it fell with a thunderous crash, because no supporting posts had been set up. The part that occupied this calamity is called *Salubshum*. Undiscouraged, the Carpenters continued their work with the assistance of posts and so built the sky as it is seen today. Then the supports were taken away.

- 772 As already stated, a sun shines on the land above. As that sun by miracle is attached to the land above, so is this upper

* 996

According to the general Bella Coola belief the supernatural ones may be classified as anthropomorphic beings, zoomorphic beings, and supernatural members of the vegetable and mineral kingdoms.

ANTHROPOMORPHIC BEINGS

The Bella Coola agree that the most important of their supernatural beings is *Alpaxim*, the supreme deity, maker of men and animals. He is most commonly known by this name but he has other appellations with reference to his various functions. The word *Alpaxim* is said to be derived from *apaxim*, "herman," or "chief." He is chief of the supernatural beings. Other names by which he is known are as follows:

Iwaxihla, a word derived from *oxa*, the Sun. This term is used almost as commonly as *Alpaxim*.

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Iwaxihla, "The Busy Man," because *Alpaxim* created the ancestral myths at the same time that he created mankind. The supreme deity is called *Iwaxihla* with reference to his membership in the *Iwaxih* society of the supernatural beings.

Iwaxihla, "From Whom Comes, and To Whom Belong, All Myths." As creator of the highly valued myths, the supreme deity is owner of them.

* 996

Iwaxihla, "The Wise One," "The Thoughtful," or "The One with Great Mental Ability."

[201]

Muxahla, a word supposedly derived from *mā*, "Father," with the suffix *hla* as a term of endearment. This is used in praying to *Alpaxim*.

[201]

Tāh, "Father," the term for father used by a child; this, like the last, is used in prayer.

[996]

Iwaxihla.

Naxwaxim, "The Advisor."

Iwaxim.

Naxwaxim, "The Light Giver."

Oxāh & Iwaxim, "The Moon Chief."

These names are not meaningless synonyms; all, or at any

772 what is probably a moosehide, with salmon painted on it,
 976 symbolic of his guardianship of fish for the benefit of mankind.
 In other respects *Nasmát-a* has no peculiarities. Behind the
 house is an enormous tree, *Tyngun-iaqim*, in the branches of
 which live innumerable owls.

976 After this description of *Nasmát-a*, it is logical to return
 [821] to its master, *Alquntám*. Guiding the sun is his most spec-
 tacular occupation, but he also governs the movements of moon
 and tides. Powerful though he is, he continues to take an
 [782] interest in the doings of mankind whom he created. Prayers
 are commonly addressed to him, and a certain type of shaman
 is believed to receive power direct from him. Other super-
 natural beings may work weal or woe to a Bella Coola, but he
 feels it is done with the sanction of *Alquntám*. At every winter
 solstice he enters *Nasmát-a*, where supernatural beings from
 all parts of the universe have gathered to greet him. This
 assembly is called *qulmaix*, and *Nasmát-a* is termed *Nusqul-
 awaiste*¹ for its duration. While waiting, the guests perform
kusiut dances, similar to those carried out by members of the
kusiut society on earth (see vol. II, chap. 1). At *Alquntám*'s
 entry the heat becomes so intense that the occupants rush
 forth precipitately, some falling and being trampled upon in the
 crush. Only three² advisers, including *Saxsaxálaix* (I, p. 41),
 remain to confer with him. They arrange the fate of human
 beings during the coming year; who shall be made a *kusiut*,
 who shall be born, who shall die. In each case the decision
 rests with *Alquntám*, though he is influenced by his counsellors.
 [777] Human beings can often learn in dreams what is being decided
 for them.

531 *Alquntám*, in spite of his strength, shares the limitations
 976 of any other chief, and is not invariably successful. The Bella
 Coola delight in telling stories of how supernatural beings,
 especially the Raven, outwitted and defeated him. Even

¹Often pronounced *Nusqulawaste*.

²The exact number is uncertain.

RELIGION

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human beings, in the beginning of time when they were semi-supernatural, sometimes prevailed against him. One story actually records his murder. From the point of view of morality, an angle from which the Bella Coola themselves do not regard him, *Alquntām* is neither moral nor immoral; he has the virtues and vices of a man. That, in fact, is a fair summing up of *Alquntām*; he is a superman, creator of life, supreme god in the sense that he is chief of the supernatural beings, but not an all-powerful deity. 776 [538]

Compared with *Alquntām*, other supernatural beings are insignificant. The Bella Coola do not regard them as a hierarchy with definitely graded rank and power; accordingly, the order in which they are described is immaterial. Reference has already been made to the supernatural Carpenters.* There are four of them, created by *Alquntām* in the beginning of time; it was they who constructed the mountains and rivers of this land, the animals and birds populating them, and supervised the making of mankind. They are considered to be four brothers, collectively known as *Musmasāllānax*.

The eldest and most powerful is *Yulātīmūt*, "He Who Completes Any Task with a Single Smoothing Motion."

The second brother is *Mātlābāllitcək*, "He Who Completes Any Task with a Single Stroke of an Adze."

The third brother is *Māllāpexwək*, "He Who Completes Any Task with Two Strokes of His Adze."

The fourth and youngest brother is *utlulək*, "He Who Completes Any Task in a Single Day."

In Kimsquit, *Mātlābāllitcək* is often called *Musmasāllānax* and the collective term is not used. These names explain the beliefs of the Bella Coola with regard to the powers of the Carpenters. After their work in the beginning of time, the three younger brothers returned to *Nusmāt-a*, where they have since resided, but *Yulātīmūt* came to earth and married a Bella Bella woman. The Bella Coola admit that members of this 186 [648]

*Cf. Boas, p. 32.

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[186]
[69] tribes are superior to themselves in carpentry, and ascribe their skill to the fact that many of them are descendants of *Ved-ah-mat*. Some of the coastal tribes are said to believe that *Alquintâm* erred in the manufacture of many of the sea mammals, giving them, for example, human heads on fish bodies; he later rectified this by sending his Carpenters to adjust their form. This is not a Bella Coola belief. One elderly man stated that the skill of the Carpenters in painting and modelling was derived from a little girl named *Shashenaw*; no confirmation could be obtained for this statement and the information was vague and unreliable.

Since their creation of the sky and many features of this world, as well as birds and animals, the Carpenters have entered but little into the lives of the Bella Coola. Like other supernatural beings, they are capable of going anywhere, but for many generations they have not been seen on this earth.

[575] Their most important function, perhaps, is to act as patrons for various *kusiat* dances. This subject will be described in detail in vol. II, chap. 1; for the moment it is enough to say that many supernatural beings regard members of this semi-sacred society as their protégés, and grant them power to perform dances. On these occasions masked figures are used to represent the patrons, thus enlightening uninitiated persons as to the appearance and attributes of various supernatural beings.

[535] Among the many residents of *Nusmât-a* are two sons of *Alquintâm*, *Sânallimulât* *Alquintâm* and *Sus'elnlit* *Alquintâm*. The former in particular is dearly loved by his father and is often spoken of as *Nuslawwanurwutâm*, "The Cherished One."

[575] These two beings take no part in the affairs of mortals except as patrons of *kusiat* dances. Like all supernatural beings they are considered to be immortal. Since *Alquintâm* has two sons it is to be assumed that he has, or had, a wife. Her name is not generally known, although she is sometimes spoken of as *Nusmât-ain-a*, "The Woman of *Nusmât-a*." There are also many stories describing his amours with human women resulting in semi-supernatural offspring.

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men to use these transformed beings habitually, but come now, or at any rate until a few years ago, shamans were able to lift the intervening veil. From accounts given by those who have had such experience, the Bella Coola believe that *Algonquin* gave to birds and animals, as well as to humans, the form of fire, and it is only the consciousness of men that makes them unable to see the smoke rising from the houses of different creatures. In former times, fortunate hunters were able to do so, and consequently had phenomenal success. The smoke that ascends from the fires of different animals corresponds in colour to that of its owner; a mountain goat's is white, a beaver's, black, a squirrel's, red, a wolf's, grey, and so on. When a goat stamps the earth on a mountain, it rings hollow, as indeed it is to those animals, for their home is within; and when a hunter loses his quarry entirely, it is because the latter has entered its house. Shamans are sometimes able to hear the gatherings of animals under the peaks. Like human beings, they dance to the accompaniment of music, and in all respects behave like them. They have their times of joy and sorrow, of success and failure. When ill they are cured by their own shamans, grizzly bear, cougar, and wolverine; these three also dance to welcome the dead. All animals and birds are like brothers, able to converse with each other and living harmoniously together in that other part of their life which only shamans have seen. Porcupine is the oldest, and a hunter always tries to kill one before passing to more important prey. The animals know about the actions of human beings and show their aversion to certain habits by refusing to allow themselves to be seen by anyone practicing them. For example, they do not like people to drink water in which dog salmon have been soaked, and no hunter would dream of partaking of that food. Bella Coola mythology is full of accounts of human beings who, with supernatural aid, were able to penetrate to the homes of animals. Tales of this type would be unintelligible without understanding the attitude of the people to the animal and bird kingdoms.

Raven, perhaps made conscious by this power, did not always use it for good purposes. His lower every one knows, those which he taught to the Bella Coola, but sometimes he indulged in adventures of an otherwise nature. In fact, he was also an "artist." The Bella Coola collect every tale concerning his exploits. These are all more stories, such as can be told by anyone, and they fall into two classes. One comprises humorous anecdotes, describing how Raven used to show off, to excite other birds and animals, and his consequent misadventures. These belong to the realm of mythology and are recorded in vol. II, chap. v. In addition, there are stories describing the inventions and tricks devised by Raven; these are given in detail here as the only satisfactory means of illustrating the attitude of the Bella Coola towards Raven.

The first Raven, to whom *Alpenlitz* granted such power, is not regarded as a bird, but essentially as a supernumerary, with the kindly characteristics of a human being, and the weakness of a concerned individual who is always trying to display his powers. The ordinary word used for a raven is *gwas*, but this first Raven is properly referred to by his titles as chief, *Nemakile*; *Alpenlitz*, "The Light-Bringer"; *Kishlawa*, "The Wise One"; *Nemamathawais*, "The Widener"; *Sumpawam* *alidit* *apam*, "The Unlamer of Light"; *Bar* *awais*, *Suai* *lib*, and *Suai*. The Bella Coola do not explain what happened to this first *Nemakile*; he appears to have dropped out of existence, and his power has not been transmitted to his descendants, the ravens of today. They are regarded as birds, with but the slightest trace of their ancestor's greatness. The Bella Coola know of the beliefs of the Kikashia concerning Raven, and say that in the north he is esteemed only a little less than the supreme deity himself. But in Bella Coola the exploits of Raven are always considered to be due to the power given him by *Alpenlitz*, whose assistant he was, although he delighted to show his own prowess by outwitting his maker.

*Alpenlitz is supposed to have widened rivers for several of the first authors.
 *Owing to the manner in which Raven is supposed to have deceived the sun.

THE BELLA COOLA INDIANS

539 Indians have the right, moreover, to hunt and collect food in the places used by them from ancient times. The areas are authorized as:

674 *Amalgamated*: the mountains where they first came to earth.

Opagwadi: a valley leading into the main valley of the Kimsquit River where Opagwadi was accustomed to hunt.

Malat del: a valley where Smasen's wives used to pick berries.

Spawak: a level tract of country on the bank of the Kimsquit River country eight miles from its mouth. The people landed here and Smasen possessed it as a hunting ground.

Malat del: another valley where Smasen's wives used to pick berries.

The place in the Kimsquit River where their salmon weir was erected, and the spot where they caught salmon.

539 175 The length and wealth of detail embodied in this myth raises the question of whether it is one of the usual type, or represents a combination of several stories strung together and related by a man eager to glorify the traditions of his own ancestors. It was received from Jim Pollard, a Kimsquit Indian, descended from Smasen, and himself the user of this name, a valuable and reliable informant. Jim is a man of great ability, who has given more proof than any other Indian of either Bella Coala or Kimsquit, and who, accordingly, has been able to validate very fully his ancestral myths and the names embodied therein. Owing to the deaths of his relatives, Jim has been able to use designations and portions of this legend which otherwise would certainly have belonged to other people. In this respect it, therefore, represents an amalgamation, but one of a legitimate nature. Theoretically, every myth would be complete if it were not for the parts possessed by others, and the aim of every wise Bella Coala is to seek the return of these pieces by judicious marriage. Jim has been able to achieve this by the death of his relatives and the assistance of his wife, herself a descendant of Smasen. Before the coming of the white man and the consequent dwindling of population, it is unlikely that any one person would have the duly validated right to tell a myth of this length, but theoretically it was possible, and might have been done by anyone as superior to his fellows as this man is to the present inhabitants of Kimsquit.

ORIGIN MYTH OF NAWULSI²

539 Among the first people dispatched to this earth were four brothers, *Namro*, *Wakku*, *Akrua*, and *Alkalali*, who came as eagles and settled in *Nawulsi*, the site of the present Manicou Cannery, Kimsquit. Before

²Related by Jim Pollard.

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A foreign agent, identified by witnesses, might have been allowed to the corner of gunshots to the Little Circle picture, producing as the only foreign element that of involvement in a discussion at the beginning of time.

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In the beginning of 1860 *Agostino* learned that his brothers should be sent down to the north. The others, when come over *Aldate*, gave down from a boat to *Demetrius* and told the younger brothers to wait while he went ahead to examination. He took the first of a well sail, so soon as he had reached the north, went far to the east, where he obtained some children's shells. Thus he returned to *Agostino's* house, left his goods with his brothers, and again went off alone to the west. This time he brought back some copper. When this he was ready to melt, so the two survivors the boys of sailors and went down to Cotton Island, South, so the *Boia* calls it. There they remained because here and there well shells found back still.

Agassiz did not give them food to carry with them, but he told them they would find no food waiting as he killed on the live island. Surprisingly they believed on that point, as their descendants, the people of Fidi, have done so this day.

Aquino had given *Shastli* a key connecting some of the newspapers which used to come down. The three older brothers decided that they also should purchase the same commercial and that, accordingly, the youngest should be kept in ignorance of the contents of the box, as confidential agents are at the present time. He was a mere boy and his older brothers used to leave him at home when they went hunting, but they had given him the most explicit instructions not to open the carefully sealed box, containing their treasure.

All went well for some time, but finally the boy yielded to temptation and opened the box. His brothers returned unexpectedly, and found him examining the whistles, with his head almost out of sight within. They decided to kill him at once. They crawled up, closed the cover on his head, and sat on the box until life was extinct. Then they laid the body on the ground before them as they sat behind the fire, and sent one of their number out to gather three small plant sticks. When this was done they covered the corpse with eagle down and sat on the ground around it, raising and lowering the sticks as if they were throwing objects into the

and, and these are more known by the child who is fortunate enough to have many friends. Primarily, responsibility rests with the parents for the care and support of their offspring, but they have the advice, assistance, and emotional aid of their relations. They are thus limited to the care of the child of either father or mother; all members of the extended family take their part. However, also, even if unlearned, take an interest in any child who shows their inclination, irrespective of his work.

Much of the care bestowed on children is of a magical nature and must be continued until a late age. Little boys follow their fathers in hunting expeditions and in acquiring knowledge by practical experience, as do girls from their mothers with regard to household tasks and domestic occupations. Even small children are quick to notice the attention paid to the culture of chiefs, and carry out their commands without delay. A disobedient child is beaten or thrown into cold water; the parents usually act in such cases, though a near relative does not hesitate to do so, especially if he is a chief. Like all other children, Bella Curia boys and girls are fond of stories and listen eagerly to the tales told in the long evenings by some old man or woman. Many of these are somewhat obscure, but they serve to teach much ancient lore, and at the same time to emphasize many taboos and restrictions which are thus assimilated without definite schooling. They illustrate the laws of morality, as does the public disapproval shown to anyone who infringes some point of etiquette or behavior. If a child makes fun of a cat-fish or a bull-head, he is not told to stop doing so; instead, one of his elders tells him how, in the distant past, there was a famine, and advises him not to scoff at the fish which alone saved his ancestors from starvation at that time. If a rude little boy laughs at a maimed or deformed man, he is told of *Alala*, a Bella Curia urchin who repeatedly mocked a one-eyed man and presently, himself, lost the sight of an eye.

"Don't laugh at cripples, blind people, or those who are

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775 as a ghost, he inflicts a damage of the fact and the latter
 776 neither the intention of the deceased. If no shaman is con-
 777 sulted, the dead then undertakes to help himself. Invisible,
 778 and armed with a barbed stick, he approaches a person who is
 779 sitting and pulls every crumb which falls to the earth. Should
 780 the man stop to pick it up, the ghost, robbed of his booty,
 781 leaves the offender with his back, causing toothache or some-
 782 times a sharp pain in the head or stomach. Other ailments are
 783 caused by the ghosts hitting with invisible stones those who
 784 have offended them. Consequently, no one picks up a crumb
 785 which has fallen, since it is impossible to know whether it has
 786 been an accident or a mine. Another indication of a ghost's
 787 danger is loss of a tooth. The loser should throw it on a fire
 788 with an invocation to the dead to accept his offering.

789 The barrier between ghosts and human beings is considered
 790 as he little more than a wall of smoke, just too dense for
 791 ordinary eyes to penetrate. In early times intercommuni-
 792 cation between the domains of the two worlds was so easy
 793 that a dying mother was once allowed to tend her dead child
 794 on earth. Unfortunately, the woman's mother one day in-
 795 curred on holding her grandchild, unaware that he was a ghost.
 796 Shocked at his appearance, the old woman dropped the child,
 797 much to the anger of the dead people.⁴ Ever since that time
 798 it has been impossible for human beings to see and talk with
 799 their deceased kinsmen. Like so many Bella Coola stories, it
 800 is doubtful whether this one is regarded as more than an item
 801 of ancient history; it is considered to be a fact, but it is not
 802 one that enters into the daily thoughts of the people.

803 Ghosts frequently come to their old homes at night where
 804 dogs can see them. If one of these animals begins to bark and
 805 gaze fixedly at a spot where nothing is to be seen, it is because
 806 a wraith is standing there and the dog's owner hopes that it
 807 will remain invisible. It is true that some individuals have
 808 received shamanistic power from a ghost, but more often a
 809 visitation is disastrous and to be avoided. A dead person often

⁴This story is recorded in detail later (I, p. 577).

CHAPTER 10

RELATIONS WITH THE SUPERNATURAL

*Introductory—Devils Apparitions—Supernatural Aid Granted
to the Unfortunate—Supernatural Good Luck—Demonism—
Direct Revelation from the Supreme God—Power Localized in
Certain Spots—Dreams*

INTRODUCTORY

THE aspects of Bella Coola life thus far described have been principally of a nature which might be experienced by any member of the community. On the other hand, contact with supernatural beings is a privilege granted to individuals without respect to rank; even arduous appeal cannot assure it. The few to whom signal favours are granted acquire a position of importance totally different from that of chiefs. The Bella Coola are firmly convinced that supernatural beings abound in the mountains and forests of British Columbia, and that every activity of human life is governed by them. Not only do these creatures include monsters of the imagination, but birds, animals, and fish; even the activities of the human mind are considered to be beyond the scope of normal life. Ancient stories describing the actions of strange creatures and conversations between man and animals are accepted as truthful accounts, so that it seems obvious to the Bella Coola that his ancestors were more powerful than he is today. Never considering the possibility of errors in his stories, he accepts the alternative hypothesis that mankind has sadly degenerated from the golden age. Nevertheless, he assumes that the beings have not altered, and consequently hopes to encounter them on every occasion. Moreover, this firm background of belief makes it easy for him to recognize supernatural influence in events which a white man would consider to be natural. It is impossible to over-emphasize this concept.

RELATIONS WITH THE UNDEAD.

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consequence of the storm, found a winding mine and saw a full-
 moon, similar to those used by the Bella Cools, connecting across
 Burke Channel, which is about a mile and a half wide at this
 point. They went close to the beach and a horse man cut a
 passage through the channels. A similar way was once seen
 connecting across South Bessie's Arm.

An unusual experience may be regarded as an omen of
 death. For example, ten many years ago a young half-breed
 saw a water-bird swam to the bank of North Bessie's Arm
 with an eagle seated in the nest. He saw his own water-bird
 towards it, but as he approached the eagle became a man.
 Then as he drew still nearer, never taking his eyes off the water
 bird, it, with its occupant, sank beneath the water, without
 leaving so much as a ripple. On relating the incident to his
 father, the latter recognized it as an omen of death. Six
 months later the half-breed's sister died, thus confirming her
 father's prognostication.

SUPERNATURAL AID GRANTED TO THE UNFORTUNATE

Experiences such as have been cited in the last section are
 regarded as of possible, and not infrequent occurrence at the
 present time. On the other hand, supernatural aid granted to
 those in misfortune, though it is the theme of many stories, is
 not considered as likely to happen now. The Bella Cools
 believe the narratives to be chronicles of actual events, and
 base their conceptions of many supernatural beings on their
 characteristics as therein described. There is no ceremonial
 significance attached to any of these stories; they may be, and
 are told by anyone, frequently for entertainment. Unques-
 tionably, there is a feeling that the moral brought out in such
 tales is of value in educating the young people, though this
 point is never emphasized.

Supernatural aid granted to an unfortunate person is
 termed *whetwaledjut*. Power so obtained cannot be trans-
 mitted by the recipient, although memory of the experience is

RELATIONS WITH THE SUPERNATURAL

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own object was desired, and that one is a witness of his power as that the one could feel as one unwelcome and. The owner finally believes that this owner has brought him money on various occasions, and will do so again, though whether he expects the coins to be found inside of the wrapping, or merely to come on him in the course of trade is questionable. According to Bella Cooia belief, they ought to appear inside the stone, but as this man possesses any good fortune or is, he never has any difficulty in proving its power.

This stone is also used as a means of increasing the efficacy of prayer. When its owner wishes ceremonially in the stone before eating in the morning, he rubs it over his body as if it were soap and expects it to make him strong, make him well, grant him his desires, and so forth.

SHAMANISM

More important to the Bella Cooia than any other manifestation of the supernatural is that power which makes an individual either an *shamane* or an *shamane*. The former is a person who, owing to ability granted him by a supernatural being, is able to perform miraculous feats, especially in curing the sick; the latter is one with similar powers obtained from a ghost.* It is impossible to translate either of these terms accurately; the designation "shaman" is accordingly used in this monograph to describe both types of supernaturally endowed individuals. The most common and most important method of obtaining such power is from a living supernatural being; a person receiving the boon in this manner will be termed "shaman," and one empowered by a ghost will be known as "shaman from the dead."

The Bella Cooia believe that long ago men were so much more powerful than at present, and so close to the supernatural, that all were virtually shamans. The prowess and adventures

*Ghosts are, of course, supernatural, but as the Bella Cooia distinguish between shamans whose powers are derived from these two sources, it is accurate to follow their example.

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* 752 of these shamans of antiquity are known to have been the
 531 The powers of the latter shamans have been for long time those
 777 of their forefathers, and their legends have been of a somewhat
 different character. Hence it is possible to divide the subject
 into three sections:

- (1) Shamans in the distant past.
- (2) Modern shamans.
- (3) Shamans from the dead.

SHAMANS IN THE DISTANT PAST

Information on this phase is contained in stories and a few
 accounts which describe the achievements of ancient shamans,
 endowed with miraculous powers of various kinds. The
 tales are similar in type to those dealing with the granting of
 supernatural aid to the unfortunate, so that it is in many cases
 difficult to differentiate them. As might be expected these
 narratives are not exact. Frequently the teller does not know
 from what being the ancient shaman received his power, nor
 can he explain the abilities described, which are different from,
 and superior to, those with which he is familiar. In fact it is
 customary to describe any mythical hero as a shaman.

[424] Tales of this kind can be related by any one; they are not
 the personal property of a specific family. Many of them, that
 of *Wawalda*, for example, are well known and are told and
 retold constantly.

* 756 In addition to information obtained from stories, a few
 225 isolated facts are remembered regarding ancient shamans. It
 [224] is thought that various taboos connected with hunting were
 learnt by them in the distant past. Such restrictions and in-
 junctions were firmly believed in and strictly adhered to until
 a few years ago, and many of them are still observed. The
 usual method of hunting harlequin ducks is, or was until
 recently, from a canoe, with a sapling set up in the bow to
 hide the hunter, crouched with bow and arrow in readiness;
 several shamans, however, were able to kill the birds by merely
 [262] waving the butt-end of a paddle towards them. Such power

CHAPTER 6

STORIES ILLUSTRATING THE SUPERNATURAL

Stories Illustrating Supernatural Aid Granted to the Unfortunate
—Stories Illustrating Supernatural Good Luck—Some
Illustrating Humors

KNOWLEDGE of the contact between supernatural and human beings is found largely upon tales describing such incidents; in fact, generalizations like those made in the last chapter are, as has been already noted, contrary to Baffin Coast practice. Such tales are, however, so numerous and so long that their inclusion in the sections describing the kind of experience they illustrate would have made the last chapter unduly cumbersome and confusing. Stories recounting these types of contact with the supernatural are brought together here, not as items of folk-lore, but as basic material to supplement the relevant sections of the last chapter. These legends are not family property, but are considered to be historical incidents which can be related by anyone. [424]

STORIES ILLUSTRATING SUPERNATURAL AID GRANTED TO THE UNFORTUNATE

THE GAMBLER'S SUCCESS

Four brothers, of whom the youngest was named *Ijiasdju-sa*, were very fond of gambling with crabapple sticks. They played on all occasions, but with such lack of success that they lost first their goods, then their houses, their mother, their children, their wives, and finally themselves. The three older men went hunting every day, but *Ijiasdju-sa* remained in the house as if he had no heart to do more than lie down and die. Perhaps he had an inspiration; at any rate he was devising his brothers, because as soon as they had gone out he used to get up and collect clams which were plentiful below the floor of the house. These were his sole sustenance, but he also chewed the fin of an old salmon, which served to exercise his jaws. Before his brothers' return *Ijiasdju-sa* always lay down in his corner, covered with an old dirty blanket, as if he

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small hole in his skin blanket and once more lay down as if to sleep, but
fixed his eye to the opening. Soon there drew near a beautiful woman
with long hair.

"Don't vanish," Kaldrap said to her. "I see you."

The woman, not at all perturbed at being seen, readily answered:

"Come to my house."

Kaldrap followed his visitor, a mouse in human form, down under the
earth to her home, a cave on the very edge of the precipice. One side
of the house opened out into the canyon without a wall of any kind.
Here the mouse-woman's three beautiful sisters were waiting.

"Let us play," said the mice. "Won't you swing with?"

[524] From the roof was suspended a swing consisting of two long ropes
with a small cross-seat at the bottom, and a long rope by which it could
be heaved back and forth, exactly like the swings formerly used by Bella
Coola boys. One of the sisters took her place on the seat and Kaldrap
pulled her back and forth so that she swung far out into the canyon.
Then another took her place, followed by the third and the fourth, until
he had swung them all. Next they suggested that he take his turn. A
second rope was attached to the seat, Kaldrap took his place, and the four
women, two on each side, pulled so strongly that he, in turn, swung far
out into the canyon. Then the treacherous mice jerked the ropes vio-
lently, throwing him from the seat down into the depths.

Even as he was falling Kaldrap retained sufficient presence of mind
to thrust out his bow, in which his supernatural power was localized, and
to which he had clung. It lodged in a cranny of the canyon wall, arresting
his fall, and he, being small and light, succeeded in gaining a foothold on
a rough path. He crawled up it to the surface of the ground at some
little distance from the place where he had camped, but on the same side
of the gorge. Full of anger, he made his way back to the house of the
mice.

"Let's play some more," he said to them.

But the mice, amazed at seeing him alive, were afraid to trust them-
selves to his swinging, even though he promised that they should later
have an opportunity of doing the same to him.

"No," they said. "Sometime we will allow you to return and play
with us, and you can sleep with us if you like. You had better go home
now."

Kaldrap returned to his camp. When, the next day, he told his sister
of his adventure she was terrified, and once more besought him to avoid
all dangers."

[538] "Though in this case the hero outwitted scheming women, it is said that in
many ancient stories the reverse was true.

754 would probably fall a victim. He became ill in May, 1913,
 761 and, though treated by a white doctor, grew steadily worse
 779 until he died in the latter part of June, three weeks after the
 828 year had elapsed. All the Bella Coola firmly believe that this
 [622] was due to the power of thought. The father of the woman
 was a powerful chief whose thoughts were accordingly potent,
 and some consider that his concentrated desires and expecta-
 tions were enough to kill the accused, while others believe that
 his expressed statements convinced others of the result, and
 that it was their combined thought that caused the death.
 It usually requires the thoughts of more than one individual
 to lead to this effect. The doctor who attended this man stated
 that his patient had shown symptoms of melancholy and resig-
 nation during his last sickness; it seems clear that the expecta-
 tion of death must have lessened his chance of recovery.

771 A prominent theme in Bella Coola folk-lore is the belief
 784 that a person cannot long survive who has made himself un-
 828 popular. It is sometimes stated that a magical means was
 employed to remove him, and this was no doubt often the case;
 • [538] a person who learns that a "medicine" had been employed to
 kill him is in no fit mental condition to counteract the power
 of suggestion, particularly if he knows that others are aware
 of what has been done. His death is regarded as proof of the
 efficacy of the means employed and the belief of others grows
 stronger. As already stated, this conviction still survives.

[648] When this ethnological investigation was being conducted, a
 point under discussion was whether or not the Kimaquit people
 should be allowed to live in Bella Coola. One chief took the
 lead in objecting and everyone expected that, having thus roused
 the ire of would-be immigrants, he would die. He did so soon
 afterwards, and it is universally believed that it was caused by
 the concentration of the hostile thoughts of the Kimaquit. Simi-
 [784] larly, the potency of taboos is increased by the fact that since
 time immemorial the thoughts of everyone have been opposed
 to any infraction. Consequently, an offender is liable to
 punishment both for breaking an injunction and because he

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171 in a flesh-coloured bathing-suit, imitating the nakedness of earlier years. The writer was talking to one of the marshals, a very old man, and remarked how different the present rite must appear to him.

"Yes," replied the old man. "But after all, the change is not so great. In former years we imitated what the supernatural beings did, now we imitate what our fathers did."

Many ethnologists, acquainted with the elaborate rituals carried out on the coast early in this century, have expressed surprise at the rapidity with which these have dwindled to mere shadows. The writer believes that one factor for the Bella Coola decline in ritual, is the realization that the rites are imitative, and that accordingly their significance need not be lost when further imitation is added.

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* 796 Further research would undoubtedly have added particulars of the manner in which other Cannibals carried out their rites, but to obtain the full details of all would have been detrimental to other types of investigation; it is believed that the above descriptions are typical. Before passing to other dances, a few general remarks on the Cannibal ritual may prove useful.

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[562] In view of the arduous character of the dance, and the necessity for impressing the uninitiated with the great power of the Cannibals, the marshals usually prohibit a man from acting unless he is physically strong. Rarely, however, a woman is allowed to be a Cannibal if she has the necessary prerogative, but usually only if she is the last survivor of her family. In such cases the shorter rite is the more common.

• [538]
[173] As before stated, *kusiut* origin myths are supposed to be remembered, but in practice few *kukusiut* know the history of their prerogatives. The process of forgetting has undoubtedly increased in the last few years, but the writer feels confident that they were never maintained with the same care as origin myths connected with the first people.

CHAPTER IV

GAMES

517 THE subject of games, lying on the border-line of social
 121 customs, was one which was not fully investigated. The
 [177] Bella Coola, like all other peoples, have a number of sports and
 pastimes and although the old diversions are being forgotten
 by the younger people, many of the old men and women are
 familiar with those played in their youth. As isolated customs
 these may be of small value, but games of all kinds often pre-
 serve ancient practices and, as providing useful clues to the
 spread of peoples or of culture, are worthy of investigation.
 Unfortunately, lack of time made it impossible to give the
 subject the attention it deserved, and the few games here
 described must not be considered an exhaustive treatment of
 the subject.

526 Though less fond of competitive sports than the Indians
 [171] of the Plains, the Bella Coola enjoy canoe-racing and wrestling.
 [628] The former appears to have been an ancient diversion; picked
 crews from different villages competed amid the encouraging
 shouts of their fellows, and even now the younger men are
 anxious to display their skill in this respect. Wrestling, which
 [177] used to be common during all non-sacred gatherings, has almost
 entirely disappeared since the prohibition of the potlatch.

• 539 The favourite sedentary pastime, enjoyed equally by young
 [517] and old, is the telling of stories. Those of a sacred nature,
 especially ancestral myths, are reserved of course for cere-
 monial occasions, but the older men and women remember
 [125] many tales describing the exploits of birds and animals which
 are recounted again and again to the enjoyment of the listeners,
 although they may have heard the same ritual fifty times.
 Children enjoy the companionship of some old story-teller and
 it is a common sight to see an old man or woman, surrounded
 by an eager group, explaining once more how Raven outwitted
 [867] his rivals or was himself led into difficulties. Many of these
 stories are somewhat indolent; others appear brutally frank,

GAMES

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but the Bella Coola do not consider this aspect and the children grow up in an atmosphere entirely lacking in restraint of speech. Some stories teach a moral lesson, but they are recounted merely for entertainment. At the present time, no one knows who invented the stories; they have been handed down from dim antiquity and alterations or embellishments are considered improper, while the composition of new tales appears to be unknown.

Another pastime is smoking. Among some Indian tribes the practice has a definite religious significance, but this appears to be lacking among the Bella Coola. Most of the men enjoy either a pipe or cigarettes, and some of the women also indulge, but few carry the habit to excess. All the older people affirmed that their ancestors had smoked for generations. Tobacco was not grown, but kinnikinnick, *mille**, was used, and also a plant known as *laie*'. Another smoking mixture was bark of *Isorhiza*, toasted before a fire until dried and brown, and then crumbled between the hands. These materials have given place entirely to imported tobacco, and the white man's pipe has replaced the native one. The latter consisted of a gooseberry cane from which the pith had been extracted; sometimes a small bowl of elderberry wood was added, but often the mixture to be smoked was simply placed within the end of the hollow stem.

Adults, especially the men, are addicted to gambling. They are fond of placing stakes on a race or other trial of strength, and enjoy all kinds of games of chance. Some of the younger men have mastered a few of the simpler games of cards on which they spend a certain amount of time and money. The favourite gambling game, however, is one found in all parts of the coast, which is played with a pack of fifty-four smoothed crabapple sticks. The rules are complicated and no effort was made to learn more than the general principles. The pieces are divided among the eight or ten contestants and concealed; then one player guesses in whose hand a certain marked stick is hidden. If he is successful, the others pay him a forfeit; if

CHAPTER V

STORIES

*Raven Stories—Animal Stories—Swamp Stories—Supernatural
Stories—Catastrophic Stories—Historical Stories*

IN addition to myths which have definite sociological importance, such as those which explain the procedure of dances and other rituals, there are many legends which can best be described as *stories*.¹ These do not belong either to individuals or to families, consequently they are more widely known than allegedly historical accounts which are the personal property of social groups. In the long winter evenings it is common to see an old man or woman surrounded by young boys and girls listening attentively to some tale. An outburst of laughter always accompanies a humorous incident, no matter how many times it may have been heard. The narration is a mere pastime, an amusement which seems never to pall either on raconteur or listener. Occasionally, a person of philosophical disposition will claim that a moral is taught by every story, and it is true that many of them point out some well-known experience of life, such as "The Biter Bit"; this must unconsciously strike the hearers, but any intentional didacticism is quite foreign to Bella Coola thought.

As will be seen, these stories contain a large number of fantastic episodes. The Bella Coola recognize this to be the case without doubting their truth. They describe events which took place long, long ago, when man and supernatural beings were in closer contact than at present; when man was able to understand the speech and actions of the birds, the mammals, and the fish. The people of today do not expect to have similar experiences now but, according to their point of view, there is no reason why the incidents of the stories could not have happened in the distant past. Frequently, different versions of the same legend are told by different men; each is

¹Stanza, a story or, more accurately, a piece of ancient lore.

53M certain that his account is the only accurate one, and ridicules his rival, but as no social importance is attached to the tales, an error in narration is a matter of small moment. Probably there have been instances in which an individual possessing much wealth has transformed a story into a family myth, but it was impossible to obtain a concrete illustration of this; it is thought that this may have been done in former years, though of course such would be absolutely contrary to custom.

Stories can be conveniently divided into two types:

[825] I. Those in which the principal character is a mammal or bird endowed with human intelligence.

II. Those in which the principal character is a human being.

[825] Many of the first type describe the adventures and mis-
[776] adventures of Raven. It must be remembered that the Bella Coola regard these stories as accurate statements of fact, and base their characterisations of many supernatural beings on their actions as recorded therein.

RAVEN STORIES

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HOW RAVEN BECAME BLACK

When Raven was fully prepared for his descent to earth, *Aiquam* told *Minkilal* to make him the prettiest of all the birds. When finished, he was adorned with many colours and was very handsome. But the vain Raven looked at himself and was not satisfied. First he asked that one arm might be changed, and when this was done as he desired, he asked for an alteration in one of his legs; and so on with nearly every part of his body. Finally, *Aiquam* became angry, and told some of his assistants to throw ashes all over him. This made Raven a uniform black, in which guise he was sent down to earth.

RAVEN AND WATER QUEEN²

As he was able to assume any form, Raven, once upon a time, took that of a heron and went to the home of Water Queen, who, having spread a fine cedar-mat for his guest, proceeded to prepare a meal. He brought

²For another version of this story see Ross, p. 92.

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him, which, with her supernatural power, she was able to do. She reluctantly granted his request, and Raven became very proud of his splendid looks. 539*

Next year, when Raven caught sockeye salmon he obeyed his wife's instructions by carefully hanging the fish up to dry without removing the heads. One day, however, his long hair became entangled with the teeth of a drying salmon, and in a fit of anger he wrenched off its head, throwing it outside the door. His wife was so vexed and grieved that she cried and cried until her face was swollen and Raven became frightened at her continued lamentation. After he had left the house, Sockeye Salmon told her sister-in-law to make a fire and put on it all her personal possessions. She said that she intended to leave that night, and that the smoke would consume her husband's salmon, but not those caught by his sister. When it was dark she carried out her threat. She whistled, and Raven's fish came to life; then she ran to the river, raised the edge of the weir as if it had been a blanket and plunged beneath, followed by them. Raven tried in vain to pursue, but lost both his wife and his salmon.

ANIMAL STORIES

Raven is more frequently endowed with human characteristics to serve as the central figure in stories than any other bird or mammal, but the following are examples of similar tales centering around other figures. 538 • 825

MINK AND CAT-FISH²⁸

Once upon a time, long, long ago, before men and animals had grown so unlike one another, Mink went to the home of a Cat-Fish woman, who politely invited him to stay for a meal. When he had finished eating he said to his hostess: 539*

"Are you afraid of anything?"

"No," she replied.

"Are you not afraid of Grizzly Bear?"

"No," answered the woman again.

Mink repeated his question with regard to Wolf, Black Bear, Wolverine, Cougar, and all the other fierce animals, but Cat-Fish assured him that she feared none of them. At length he asked:

"Are you afraid of Owl?"²⁹

There are no true cat-fish in Bella Coola; the species so designated is probably one of the sculpins. [136]

²⁹He meant the western horned owl.

[See pp. 419-433. - ANALYST.]

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and cold to destroy the reckless creatures who had dared to oppose him. While he was climbing down, the attackers called out, attracting his attention, so that Halibut was able to wriggle, unobserved, to a place at the bottom of the ladder. As Cold Wind trod upon him, Halibut moved, and his antagonist fell to the ground. He was seized by his enemies before he could rise to release more cold.

"What have you against me?" he asked them. "I visit you only twelve months in the year."

"That is too often," his captors replied, as they stretched him out on the ground to kill him.

"If you spare me I will visit you for nine months only," Cold Wind made offer.

Again he was told that was too much, and he must be killed. Cold Wind, terrified, proposed coming for shorter and shorter periods, six months, four months, two months, and finally for a single month, but each offer was refused, and followed by threats of instant death. At length the captors accepted his agreement to come only in the early morning.

That is why, to this day, the cold wind comes only in the early morning.

Snunig STORIES

Of the supernatural animals which the Bella Coola believe inhabit the wild glens and mountains of British Columbia, that which figures most prominently in their mythology is the *snunig*. There are four slightly different varieties of this monster. The most common is regarded as being about the size of a large grizzly bear, but with long front legs and short hind ones, on which it can run in upright position when it so desires. Its legs terminate in large talons resembling those of an eagle, with the thumb set opposite to the fingers; its pelt, long and fleecy, is of a grayish-blue colour. The monster is able to roll its eye-balls completely over, and, when the reverse side is exposed, there shoot forth dazzling beams of light which strike senseless anyone on whom they fall. It uses its eyes for hunting. The most peculiar feature of the *snunig*, however, is that it carries on its back a basket provided with spikes inclined inwards and downwards at such an angle that any living creature thrust within is unable to escape. The basket

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776 can be removed at will, and the Bella Coola relate how, long ago, the inhabitants of a village captured one of these. Cruelly, they placed it at the top of a lofty tree, then carefully smoothed off the bark to make climbing virtually impossible. The unfortunate *smung* tried repeatedly to scale the tree, amid the mockings of its human tormentors; at last it succeeded in doing so, whereupon it dashed off, happily, with its basket.

Less dangerous than the *smung* is the creature known as *po gwals*, differing only from the true *smung* in having a band of white through its eyes. A third variety, *smungos wa sundas*, the mountain *smung*, remains perpetually above the line of vegetation. Little is known of it.

The most dangerous is a true *smung* with the genital organs of a woman on its forehead. This creature is able to reverse the course of streams, to cause light snow to fall, and even to raise up mountains when pursued. A hunter meeting one of these monsters is in deadly danger unless he calls it by its name, *splx*, female genitalia. So doing will cause the animal to lose its power and grovel and writhe impotently on the ground.

Like all other supernatural animals, the *smung* is believed to have only recently quitted the vicinity of Bella Coola, on account, so it is said, of the noise made by the rifles of the white man. No living Bella Coola claims to have seen one of the animals, though several state that they have heard them not many years ago. It is assumed that the *smung* has migrated to some less populated area, probably to the region north of Dean Channel and east of Frederick Island.

The following stories, which are among the most popular in Bella Coola, illustrate the characteristics of the *smung*.

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THE GRAVE ROBBER¹¹

Long, long ago, there was a large Bella Coola town¹² on the White-

¹¹For another version of this story see Boss, p. 86.

¹²Other informants stated that the village was *Stux*.

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It was a long journey home, perhaps twelve miles, but the little girl carefully carried one end of the rope, nor did she forget to tie it to a tree before she entered the house. When she had told of her amazing adventures, great was the delight of her parents at her escape from such a perilous predicament. She told of the old woman rooted to the ground, and gave her name, well-known as that of a woman who had mysteriously disappeared one night many years previously, whose fate had never been discovered. The girl told also of the wealth on the walls of the *swung's* house, valuables robbed from the coffins of the dead, and how the old woman had bade her bring her friends to carry away the loot.

Next morning the entire population of the village set out on the quest, led by the little girl, who carefully watched the rope to guide her back to her destination. After travelling about twelve miles they came to the canyon.

"We are almost there," she said. "I can see the opening into the cave."

No one else could distinguish it so the villagers went closer, but still it remained invisible to all except the girl herself. She rubbed her hands over the eyes of about a dozen men and at once they were able to see the mouth of the cave. With these men she entered and found nothing altered since the preceding day. The place was packed to the roof with all sorts of treasure, including a countless number of mountain goat skins, highly prized for their wool. The men took down the valuables and divided them equally among all who had taken part in the expedition. A more difficult task was to free the old woman. First they tried to pull her up, but the roots were as firm as if a part of the mountain itself. At her request, given the day before to the little girl, they had brought an axe and when all else failed they cut her roots. When the last was severed, however, her life went too far it extended down into them. So the party went home without her.

Two other versions of this story were collected; they resemble the accounts here given so closely that publication seems unnecessary.

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SUPERNATURAL STORIES

In this section are grouped a number of miscellaneous accounts, describing the adventures of supernaturally endowed individuals, and of those who came in contact with supernatural beings but received no special boon. These are of

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many kinds, some of which verge on the tales of shamans already given. Like all others in this chapter, the following stories have no social significance and can be related by anyone.

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THE WRONGED WOMAN

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Long, long ago, the sister of *Kina'o* married a foreign chief with whom she went home to live. Her husband used to beat her and treat her so abominably that she kept asking him to allow her to return; finally he consented, and she set off gladly with him in his canoe. About half-way to the destination, the husband landed and asked his wife to climb with him to the top of a very tall tree. This she did, nor did she become suspicious when he sharpened the extreme tip of the trunk. Suddenly, he seized her, and thrust her down on to the point which pierced into the lower part of her body, pinning her to the tree-top. The evil husband then returned home.

The captive did not die immediately. From the tree-top she could see canoes passing, and kept calling out for help, but no one heard her. At last her brother *Kina'o* went by, en route to his sister's home with a present of food. Not knowing who he was, she cried out as she had done before; he recognized her voice, landed, but at first could not see her, and was filled with amazement to discover her pinned up the tree. Up he climbed to lift her off, but as he did so, she died.

Kina'o determined to have his revenge. He clothed himself in his sister's cape, hat, and blanket, in order to resemble her; this was an easy matter as the two looked alike. Thus attired, he continued his way to his brother-in-law's village, which he entered, leaning heavily on a stick as if he had received an injury to the lower part of his body. He said nothing, but *Simeas*, his sister's husband's mother, saw him and mistook him for her daughter-in-law.

"You have been beating your wife again," she said to her son. "Look how she is limping."

He did not answer, being amazed to see her alive.

Kina'o lay down as if sick while *Simeas* prepared for her a dish of putrid salmon roe and bracken roots. When this was ready, the old woman sent one of her daughters to summon the supposed daughter-in-law who sat down near the fire and ate with bent head. The daughter noticed the great size of the ester's arms and legs and commented upon this to her mother.

"Hush!" answered the latter. "Don't be rude."

When *Kina'o* had finished eating he went back to bed and then the

*539 him how unhappy he was, because people on earth called him a bastard.
821 "Never mind, my son," said *Ilquntam*. "Presently, I will let you do my work and then you will be more powerful than anyone on earth."

Next morning the father sent the lad off to act as sun, giving him the usual supply of heat. But the boy was so angry with the people on earth that he increased this supply, hoping to burn up the whole of them. Seeing some children at play, he swooped down to slay them; it became so hot that water boiled in the lakes and rivers and the whole race of mankind was roasted to death. Most of the animals escaped by hiding in burrows, but not the black bear, who at that time had a white coat. It was burnt black and has remained that colour ever since, while the grizzly was scorched to his present rustiness. The deer and the weasel failed to hide their tails, both of which were burnt; that is why each has a black tip to this day.

[825] *Alquntam*, angry at his son for killing everybody, restored all to life, and broke the malicious child into countless pieces which he threw down to earth in the form of mosquitoes.

CATASTROPHIC STORIES

•538 Disasters which occurred in the distant past provide themes for stories of a non-ceremonial nature.

THE FAMINE

*539 *Ka'lan-a* was a Kimsquit man who made a practice of watching the sun; from its movements he was able to foretell the solstices and other coming events. One winter, long ago, the sun, instead of stopping at its usual place, continued far beyond its proper course. *Ka'lan-a* was much worried and prophesied strange changes, with famine; he called on the young men to weep, but instead they merely laughed at him. Next summer, when there was plenty of fish, berries, and other foods, the people jeered at the prophet. For four years there was the same plentiful hunting and collecting, but in the fifth came a great change. It failed to become warm in April; the berries flowered, but the constant cold wind prevented their fruit from ripening. Few fish entered the river, and even they could not be caught because the water remained so clear. The same conditions prevailed for four years until the people were starving; their only food was porcupine and mountain goat, with a few trout caught on hook and line. About this time a Kimsquit man, *Tsaisilish*, went goat-hunting behind his village, and one night after setting his snares, lay down in a cave. He could not sleep, and presently heard the

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Another account of the flood states that while many persons fled to Mount *Nusqulst*, others took refuge on the summit of the mountain opposite to it, on the north side of the Bella Coola River. The waters continued to rise until this latter peak was on the point of being submerged, when it requested *Nusqulst* to give it some of itself. *Nusqulst* complied, and gave to the other the small knob that projects from its summit. This was not inundated.

Kimsquit too was flooded at the same time. The Kimsquit River rose until the people were driven to the slopes of the mountain now known as *Sulukst*, to the west of the river. Here they were forced to camp for several months, and it is from this event that the river received its name, which means "Many Houses." The Dean River people were driven to Mount *Swahy*, where, in later years, indications of their sojourn were to be found, such as mooring loops for canoes, hooks for lifting fish-traps, and various utensils. One man tried to remove some of these relics, but they crumbled in his hands as if they had been burnt paper.

According to Bella Coola belief, the flood was not limited to any one locality. As evidence of its occurrence in Fort Rupert the following myth was related by a man who had heard it from his father's father, a Fort Rupert Indian.

One of the latter's ancestors, having dreamt that a flood would cover the earth, prepared a great quantity of gum with which he pitched his house both inside and out. Presently it began to rain, and the deluge continued until the whole land was covered, but this man dwelt secure in his rain-proof house. When at last he heard the sound of drops on the roof, he knew that the flood must have diminished so he dared open his door. When he and his family went outside they found on the shore two *susiutl*, the supernatural double-headed salmon that cause land-slides. From this event the man took the designation, *Nukao-sa*. When the present owner of the name performs his ceremonial, the beating-boards are in the shape of a *susiutl*, and there appears a masked figure of a man who always shields his face with his arm. This appears to be an allusion to the man protecting himself from the waters.⁷⁹

It is said that the time of the great heat⁸⁰ occurred soon after the flood.

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HISTORICAL STORIES

Although the Bella Coola regard all the stories included in this chapter as chronicles of events, yet they realize that all the preceding possess elements of the supernatural which are

⁷⁹It was impossible to learn the type of ceremonial of which this story serves as origin myth; it has accordingly been included in this miscellaneous section.

⁸⁰Various accounts of this have already been given; see vol. II, p. 424 and p. 500.

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not likely to occur at the present time; in fact, they belong to the golden age of the distant past. In addition, a few tales are popularly told, not for their wealth of interesting detail, but as historical incidents. Some of these contain exaggerations that verge on mythology, whereas others, especially those dealing with certain individuals not long deceased, have clearly a foundation of truth. The themes include tales of travel, hunting exploits, the experiences of criminals, and varied subjects.

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THE WIFE WHO WAS SOLD AS A SLAVE

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This story describes the adventures of a Bella Coola woman, daughter of a chief named *Taxewain*, who was married to a Bella Bella chief. The latter's father sold her as a slave to *Trubsa*, a Kitkatla chief and ancestor of the chief with the same name who was so feared by the Bella Coola. This was, of course, contrary to all established custom. *Trubsa* carried the woman away to Kitkatla, whence there seemed little hope for her return.

Trubsa owned a number of crabapple trees at Kitlobe which he visited every autumn to collect and preserve the fruit. The woman had been with him for some time when he went as usual for the ripe apples. Members of different tribes can be distinguished by their different physique and a Kitlobe, recognizing that the woman was a Bella Coola, asked her how she came to be with *Trubsa*. She told him how she had been sold, disgracefully, and he promised to help her return home. Telling her to conceal her plans, he bade her to be ready to flee early the following morning. At the appointed time he appeared, bringing dried olachen, grease, moccasins, and other equipment, wrapped in a seal's stomach. He sketched on the ground the overland route to Kimsquit, telling her how many affluents of the Kitlobe River she must pass before following one to the south, thence across the divide, and down the Kimsquit River. [144]

The woman started out, but after several days of travel realized that she had passed the place where she should turn south, and was lost. In point of fact, she was at this time near Ootsa Lake. She headed back in the hope of recovering her trail, but snow fell and she could go no farther; to make matters worse she had consumed all her olachen, and most of the grease. The unfortunate woman sought shelter under a big tree, where in time she was completely covered with snow. Every day she ate a small

*539 [224] a large cave in the vicinity where the hunters smoked the meat and boiled down the grease and marrow, but they had killed so many that it was January before their task was completed. Meanwhile the smell of flesh had attracted a number of martens which were caught in snares; in fact, they captured enough for two blanket-robos. When ready to leave for home, they prepared snow-shoes and on these safely negotiated the deep drifts and reached the village where all hope of their safety had long been abandoned. *Sānuximāxōts* arrived at dusk and heard his parents weeping and wailing; he asked who had died and found that they were mourning for him. His safe return turned their lamentations into rejoicings and a herald was sent out to call in the villagers to share the good news. When finally packed in, there was enough goat meat for an elaborate potlatch."

[226] A year or two later, four men prepared to set out one afternoon to fish for trout. As they were leaving, *Sānuximāxōts*'s young son begged to be taken along and cried so piteously that they at last consented. So they wrapped him carefully in a goat-skin blanket, and placed him in the bottom of the canoe which they paddled about six miles upstream. They landed on the bank, cooked a meal, and dried black spruce branches over the fire to serve as torches to lure the fish within range of their spears. [224] When night had fallen, they began to drift downstream, one man holding aloft a brand while the others speared. They had fair success, but nothing noteworthy occurred until, as they neared *Nuxūlūt*, they saw white on the water, and paddled slowly forward, thinking it must be a huge flock of swans. As they drew nearer they saw that it was snow; a huge slide had swept over the village and blocked the channel of the river. The water, no longer able to flow westward, was swirling back to the east, and the fishermen drifted with it until they found a place to camp for the night with their young companion.

As soon as it was light, they returned to the scene of the disaster and found a deep bed of snow over the site of the village. They landed to investigate, and called repeatedly, hoping that some at least had escaped. At last they heard an answer and began to dig, imagining that it must be *Sānuximāxōts* himself. After excavating a deep hole, they unburied the sole survivor, a slave who had escaped by covering with a copper the

• [538] [551] "It will be noticed that there are many points of similarity between this story and the one in vol. II, p. 512. It is possible that they are versions of the same account, but it seems more likely that they refer to different incidents of which the principal character of one has been forgotten. In such cases the Bella Coola, believing that individuals with the same name often have the same characteristics, frequently give to the hero of an earlier incident the name of a person who has figured in a similar one within recent years.

THE MAN HIMSELF

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to the aesthetic, their skill in dancing and dramatics is noteworthy: no one who has witnessed a native dance can fail to have been impressed by the performance of the participants and the stage-craft of the carpenters. The fact that no system of writing had ever been devised has prevented the establishment of a native literature, but the practice of passing down an extensive folklore by word of mouth shows their narrative powers as well as their faculty for remembering details. At present it is difficult to appreciate what must have been their energy in earlier times when they faced the struggle for existence, armed with stone tools. Abundant salmon gave them adequate food, but only when weirs had been built with great labour. Though game was plentiful, the hunter was equipped with nothing more formidable than a bow and arrow. The simplest task required patience and skill undreamed of by the average white man. If the reader will allow his imagination to carry him backwards two hundred years, he will realize that the mere provision of food and clothing necessitated constant effort and ceaseless exertion.

Hand in hand with many admirable characteristics, the Bella Coola display others which strike the white man as unprepossessing. A first impression is the untidiness of their houses. Exteriorly, they are often fairly neat, but confusion reigns within. Clothing, instead of being hung up, is left lying on the floor; bed-coverings are piled carelessly; dirty dishes cover the tables; dogs and children swarm over the floor; flies abound; all is dirty and slovenly. The house itself may be uncompleted; a window lacks glass and has been boarded up; the roof leaks, or the steps are falling down. Nor are the surroundings more attractive. There is one struggling flower-bed in the village, but elsewhere the houses are surrounded by wastes of mud where horses and cattle wander, dogs prowl, and children play. In the distance the mountain peaks rise in splendour, but near at hand all is squalid and unkempt.

They are only slightly more particular about their personal appearance. Dirt does not distress them. They wash occa-